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Weekend, September 7-9, 2018 metro.us | t: MetroPhilly | f: MetroPhilly

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JUST 'BLAZE'

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ISTOCK

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5 THINGS TO KNOW

WELCOME TO METRO PHILLY

A.D. AMOROSI, FEATURES REPORTER

I knew that the Miss America pageant came with the feel of the sexist and the antiquated, and that a change toward realness and relevance was necessary. In speaking to passionate pageant people, I found that they too welcomed change in leadership. What they weren't expecting was for its traditions to be completely discarded. As so many women have used the positive platform of the pageant for good, changing several of its most distinct aspects seems to be a push too far in one direction. Read more inside and on **metrophilly.us.**

FLU-LIKE SYMPTOMS AFFECT 2 PHILLY FLIGHTS

1 Passengers and crew on two flights arriving in Philadelphia from Europe on Thursday were screened by medical teams after 12 people aboard became ill with flu-like symptoms, a day after a similar outbreak on a flight from Dubai to New York. All 250 people on separate American Airlines flights from Munich and Paris were "held for a medical review" as a precaution, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) was notified, airport spokeswoman Diane Gerace said. Both of the flights had arrived at Philadelphia International Airport on Thursday afternoon, she said. CDC worked with Philadelphia health officers, emergency responders and Customs and Border Patrol agents to evaluate the passengers who reported feeling sick for influenza and other respiratory illnesses, CDC spokesman Benjamin Haynes said. "Twelve passengers from the two flights reported sore throat and cough, none were identified with fever. None of the passengers are severely ill, and they will be released and informed of test results in 24 hours," Haynes said.

GUNMAN KILLS 3, THEN IS SHOT DEAD IN CINCINNATI

2 A gunman dressed in a business suit opened fire inside a bank in downtown Cincinnati early on Thursday, killing three people and wounding others before being shot and killed by police, authorities said. The shooter began firing inside a loading dock at the Fifth Third Bank headquarters near Fountain Square, police said. He then entered the lobby, where he exchanged fire with law enforcement. "He was actively shooting innocent victims, it appears, and our officers were able to kill him and stop the threat very quickly," Cincinnati Mayor John Cranley told a news conference. The city's police chief, Eliot Isaac, said the suspect was Omar Enrique Santa Perez, 29, of North Bend, Ohio, a Cincinnati suburb. He said the shooter, who fired a 9-millimeter semi-automatic pistol during the incident, was not a former or current employee of the bank. Investigators have not identified a motive for the shootings, Issac said. A search was conducted of his apartment, he said. Santa Perez had about 200 rounds of ammunition with him during the shootings, Issac said.

CARLSBERG MAKES WAVES TO REDUCE PLASTIC WASTE

3 Danish brewer Carlsberg revealed a mermaid "canstruction" alongside Edvard Eriksen's iconic "Little Mermaid" statue on Thursday in Copenhagen to launch a new multipack that will reduce plastic waste by 1,200 tons annually.

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TOP AIDES SCURRY TO DISAVOW NY TIMES OP-ED

4 Senior aides to Donald Trump scrambled on Thursday to disown a New York Times column written by an unnamed administration official that slammed the leadership style of the U.S. president as impetuous, petty and ineffective. As Trump flew to Billings, Mo., for a rally where he was likely to rip into the article, more of his top advisers joined the crowd denying any responsibility for its authorship. The unsigned column drew disavowals from at least 11 advisers to Trump, including Vice President Mike Pence, Ambassador to Russia Jon Huntsman, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Defense Secretary James Mattis. Trump seethed about the piece and framed it as a jab from critics in denial about his successes, while Washington was consumed with speculation about who wrote the opinion piece. First Lady Melania Trump said in a statement on Twitter: "To the writer of the oped - you are not protecting this country, you are sabotaging it with your cowardly actions." Published on Wednesday, the column appeared days after the release of excerpts from a book by famed reporter Bob Woodward.

CBS BOARD IN EXIT NEGOTIATIONS WITH MOONVES

5 Media company CBS Corp's board is in settlement talks with Chief Executive Officer Les Moonves to negotiate his exit, a source familiar with the matter said on Thursday. These discussions are tied to the settlement talks over the control of CBS between the company, Shari Redstone and majority shareholder National Amusements Inc, the source said. The board has offered a roughly $100 million exit package, CNBC reported earlier on Thursday, citing people familiar with the negotiations. The number could not be independently verified. A New Yorker report in late July featured claims against Moonves from six women spanning different time periods over two decades, from 1985 to 2006. The allegations included sexual assault and unwanted advances. The board has asked for autonomy from its controlling shareholder, according to a Wall Street Journal report on Thursday. If granted, CBS could be free to pursue a sale. CBS shares were up more than 3 percent.

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WEEK 31: 9/3-9/9/18

The 2018 Miss America Competition GETTY IMAGES

Insiders skeptical new, stripped-down 'Miss America' can succeed

EXCLUSIVE

An internal battle is brewing over a new "Miss America" without swimsuits or evening gowns, per new chairwoman Gretchen Carlson.

A.D. AMOROSI
letters@metro.us

When Sunday night's 2019 Miss America pageant unfurls, live from Atlantic City's Boardwalk Hall, it's going to be a far messier affair than it started out as 98 years ago. It's not even really going to be called a "pageant" anymore, but rather a "competition."

It all began in 1920, along the sands of AC, as a "fall frolic" bathing beauty revue that would lengthen the time (and tourist dollars) of the Labor Day holiday for the town's merchants. Simple, but sexist, and for years following that auspicious start, women from across the nation, ages 17 to 25, wore swimsuits and smiled widely — even through the late '60s rise of feminism and the civil rights movement — for the cameras and the judges.

Fast-forward to this week in AC, and Wednesday's first night of preliminaries debuted a new, swimsuit-less, evening-gown-less Miss America competition, a reconstituted #MeToo-conscious pageant shaped by the circumstance of its recently-elected chairwoman Gretchen Carlson.

Though first known for being crowned Miss America in 1989, and for a hosting run on Fox News, Carlson shot to activist fame when, in 2016, her contract expired from Fox News and she filed a lawsuit against then-Fox News CEO and chairman Roger Ailes claiming sexual harassment. Fox News parent 21st Century Fox Corporation settled the lawsuit for $20 million, and Carlson became an early face of the burgeoning #MeToo movement.

Those two worlds collided when one-time pageant chairman Sam Haskell resigned in December 2017 after making disparaging, sexist remarks about former Miss Americas by email and Carlson was crowned again, this time as the pageant's boss.

What does Carlson get for being chairwoman? Along with posters of her likeness with the words "So Fake" hanging from street lights outside Boardwalk Hall in derision of her swimwear-less decision, there is an overall feeling that anointing her as Miss America's chairwoman was a bad move.

And not just because Carlson allegedly bullied and mentally abused the current titleholder, Miss America 2018 Cara Mund. (In an open letter, Mund claimed organization leaders bullied and "silenced" her.)

According to several off-the-record conversations with longtime Miss America insiders and fresh information gathered from the Voy-Forum pageant trade message board, the entire competition is being zealously browbeaten into submission

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Cara Mund, the 2018 Miss America winner. GETTY IMAGES

according to Carlson's self-righteous whims. "They want to be beautiful and not just show off talents and political concerns," said one source. (Two individuals deeply familiar with the Miss America organization's history interviewed for this piece declined to be identified due to job concerns. Both have been closely involved with Miss America and pageant life for decades.)

Reports from the prelims, from expert witnesses who were once hopeful in regards to Carlson's potentially fair, empowering and pro-woman stance, now believe that the new chairwoman has hijacked the pageant for her own glory ("We're expecting a long on-air speech from her … mentioning she went to Stanford U, and claiming to have started the #MeToo movement") and that perhaps she just wanted her own pageant "without doing all the work," claimed the source.

Another enraged, off-the-record insider asked, "if she really wanted to empower the 51 girls who are competing, why not poll them and ask them if they wanted to do swimsuit?"

Karl Nilsson, spokesman for the Miss America Organization, dismissed these sources' opinions.

"Journalism is not the anonymous rantings from naysayers lifted from message boards and reprinted as fact. This has slowly turned into a circus sideshow," Nilsson responded via email. "You're asking for comment simply to incite a reaction and to give legitimacy to these disgruntled voices who choose to hide in the dark. These attempts only perpetuate the spreading of more lies, untruths, and gossip. The focus is 51 amazing women who are here to compete to be crowned the next Miss America. How nice it would be if everyone else shared that same vision."

"Carlson didn't want the glitz and glamour often associated with the pageant, or whatever this is to be called."

Is Miss America really a pageant? Not according to Carlson, who has turned the event into a "competition" and the contestants into "candidates." Apparently, the newly-imagined event isn't expected to have a runway, so the current Miss America won't get to take her final walk down the runway before crowning her successor.

Not only are there no swimsuits and evening gowns, the sashes worn by the women will no longer say "Miss," but only the state of origin.

Does that mean, when the crown comes out and a victor is named Miss America 2019, that it could just say, "America?" "I guess the winner won't get roses either," joked one source. "Carlson didn't want the glitz and glamour often associated with the pageant, or whatever this is to be called."

With all these changes going on with their investment, how does the Atlantic City business community who helped start the pageant in the first place feel about these seismic shifts? How does Atlantic City's Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA) feel after its recent additional $4.325 million supplemental subsidy went to Miss America's coffers, for a total of a nearly-$12 million payout over the past three years?

"The CRDA is currently in the third and final year of our contract with the Miss America Organization," said CRDA Communications Manager Karen Martin. "Nothing else is forthcoming at this time."

It's not so much who wins and what happens on Sunday as it is, who wins — and who stays — on Monday. Stay tuned.

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Hollywood icon Burt Reynolds dies at 82

Burt Reynolds, whose good looks and charm made him one of Hollywood's most popular actors as he starred in films such as "Deliverance," "The Longest Yard" and "Smokey and the Bandit" in the 1970s and '80s, died on Thursday at the age of 82, The Hollywood Reporter said, citing his manager.

At the peak of his career, Reynolds was one of the most bankable actors in the film industry, reeling off a series of box-office smashes until a career downturn in the mid-1980s. He rebounded in 1997 with a nomination for a Best Supporting Actor Academy Award for "Boogie Nights" and won an Emmy Award for his role in the 1990-1994 TV series "Evening Shade."

ARNOLD
@Schwarzenegger

"Burt Reynolds was one of my heroes. He was a trailblazer. He showed the way to transition from being an athlete to being the highest paid actor, and he always inspired me. He also had a great sense of humor - check out his Tonight Show clips. My thoughts are with his family."

With his trademark mustache, rugged looks and macho aura, he was a leading male sex symbol of the 1970s. He appeared naked — reclining on a bearskin rug with his arm strategically positioned for the sake of modesty — in a centerfold in the women's magazine Cosmopolitan in 1972.

Reynolds' personal life sometimes overshadowed his movies, with marriages that ended in divorce to actresses Loni Anderson and Judy Carne and romances with others, including Sally Field and Dinah Shore. Reynolds also generated attention for financial woes and his struggles with prescription pain medication.

Reynolds cited director John Boorman's Oscar-nominated 1972 "Deliverance" as his best film and said he regretted that the hoopla from his Cosmopolitan appearance detracted from the movie that made him a star. He played tough-guy Lewis Medlock — opposite Jon Voight, Ned Beatty and Ronny Cox — in the chilling tale of a canoe trip gone bad in rural Georgia.

He starred in dozens of films, including "White Lightning" (1973), "W.W. and the Dixie Dancekings" (1975), "Hustle" (1975), "Nickelodeon" (1976) and "Semi-Tough" (1977). He was the top money-making star at the box office from 1978 through 1982.

Many of his films were set in the South. He often played a lovable rascal who outwits local authorities, as in director Hal Needham's 1977 crowd-pleasing action comedy "Smokey and the Bandit," co-starring his girlfriend Field and Jackie Gleason, and its two sequels.

MARK WAHLBERG
@markwahlberg

"Rest in peace to a legend and a friend. #BurtReynolds"

Another of his better roles was that of a former pro quarterback who lands in prison and assembles a team of convicts to play the warden's squad of brutal prison guards in 1974's rollicking "The Longest Yard," directed by Robert Aldrich. He appeared in a supporting role of 2005's remake with Adam Sandler.

Reynolds also directed several movies in which he starred, including "Gator" (1976), "The End" (1978), "Sharky's Machine" (1981) and "Stick" (1985).

While some of his performances were critically praised, others were ridiculed, particularly in the bloated action comedy "Cannonball Run II," a sequel to his financial success "The Cannonball Run" (1981). He also starred in the notorious 1975 musical flop "At Long Last Love," a film so atrocious that director Peter Bogdanovich publicly apologized for making it.

REUTERS

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THE FOREMAN FORECAST: TRUMP'S SECRET PROTECTOR?

ANALYSIS

TOM FOREMAN

CNN's Tom Foreman is the author of the book "My Year of Running Dangerously."

Who's the rat? For President Trump and his fans, no question is more burning. Who is the anonymous "senior official" in the White House who authored that searing New York Times op-ed about a secret cabal thwarting the president's impulses?

We are told here at CNN that letters are fast piling up from Trump's team members denying any role in the article or the alleged palace intrigue. That's probably a smart move, since Trump has already dismissed the piece as "cowardly" and will likely dismiss the author as soon as she or he is discovered. That could be very satisfying to this president who loves playing the tough guy and who made "You're fired!" a pop-culture catchphrase.

But there is a case to be made that Republicans-at-large would be better served if the mole stays hidden. Think about it.

Sure, he/she has called the president amoral, erratic, and an architect of instability who seems to prefer dictators to democratically-elected leaders. He/she has openly dismissed Trump as a weak conservative, and an enemy of basic American freedoms.

But the anonymous author also explicitly says these secret agents in the White House want the administration to succeed. They believe many Trump policies, as chaotic as they have been in birth, are maturing well and "have already made America safer and more prosperous." Indeed, the author celebrates and defends much of the Trump agenda as surely as a Midwest voter in a MAGA hat. He/she just doesn't want to see it all ruined by the impetuous behavior, rampant deceits and inexperience of the man at the helm. What's more, the author fears if Trump is utterly unchecked he will lead not just himself, but the whole party, down a perilous road with incalculable political costs.

Condemn the writer if you wish, but one could argue this person is a loyalist intent on saving Donald Trump, the Trump legacy and the Republican party from the one person who could bring it all crashing down … Donald Trump.

@metrophilly

Pat King
Grumble Editor

the GRUMBLE

Yesterday, I wrote a Grumble about my frustration with not being able to bring my dog into bars and asked you, Grumble reader, to let me know how you feel about this issue.

Some were into the idea... LET DOGS INTO BARS!
I would rather drink with my dog than some of the patrons. My dog is a "food hound," so as long as there is no food around we would be fine. She might do her donut dance for attention but that would be the worst-case scenario.
— **Meg Hall**, *Metro US reader*

Others were not so into it... NO. DOGS SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED IN BARS!
Why do people who own dogs assume that EVERYONE loves them? Unless it is a service dog, I personally don't want to see dogs on a plane, or in a restaurant or bar. People have allergies, and some folks have fears and phobias. No matter how "trained" a dog is, it can be be triggered when in a new environment and potentially cause a major problem, especially if there is more than one canine in a public place. Don't get me wrong, I like dogs, but it's a pet — not a child or a companion. Well, maybe for some. There are dog parks all over the city... take your dog there, not to a public place designed for humans to enjoy themselves.

Of course, I am responding to the Grumble in the Sept. 6 Metro. There is no "war" against dogs. They are animals and not EVERYONE thinks they are cute enough to hang out with their owners in all public places. Next thing you know, people will have their dogs in the club or in church. Might as well let them come to the gym and work out also.
— **Omar Torrance**, *Metro US reader*

Tell us what you think!
@metrophilly

Let's keep this conversation going. Should dogs be allowed in bars? Send us your thoughts at grumble@metro.us

VENT TO US! GRUMBLE@METRO.US

#metrophilly *caption this photo*

The winning caption from Louise D. Rodgers, *Metro US reader*

MONDAY'S PHOTO:

metro.us/horoscopes

Aries Take good care of your health. Avoid getting involved with anyone who is a bad influence or is negative and aggressive. Surround yourself with people who share your opinions.

Taurus If you want to make a change, put your plans in motion. A job opportunity looks promising and should be dealt with before you move on to social activities.

Gemini Share the love with those who bring you joy. Arrange to host a gathering at your place or spend time fixing up your space to accommodate future projects.

Cancer Try something unique. Showing interest in someone else's activities will give you an idea for things you can do in your life that will make you feel content and at ease.

Leo Don't pick a fight or get involved with people who want to change you or coax you into something that isn't good for you. Aim to stabilize your life instead of disrupting it.

Virgo Plan to attend a social event, take a trip or get involved in activities that involve physical activity or children. The people and places you encounter will enrich your life.

Libra Make suggestions, but don't offer to do too much for others. You'll be taken advantage of if you are overly accommodating or don't know when or how to say no.

Scorpio Settle into a routine. The more structured your life is, the better. If you give in to someone's emotional whims, you will end up having little time to take care of your needs.

Sagittarius Stick close to home and protect your assets, possessions and a relationship with a loved one. Someone trying to meddle in your affairs will give you the wrong impression.

Capricorn You can take the world by storm. Stand tall and put your plans in motion. A moneymaking deal looks promising and will bring about positive change to your standard of living.

Aquarius Look for an investment that will help you expand your plans. A partnership will hold you back. Do your own thing.

Pisces Taking care of business before moving on to pleasurable pastimes will leave a good impression on someone who can be beneficial to you in the future.

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'The Nun' director on shooting in Transylvania, the 'heartland' of horror

Corin Hardy insists that doing so allowed him to tap into the mythology of the genre.

GREGORY WAKEMAN
Gregory.Wakeman@metro.us

Corin Hardy went to the "heartland" of horror mythology to shoot "The Nun." JUSTIN LUBIN/WARNER BROS.

Everything about "The Nun" feels unsettling.

Of course, the fact that it is the fifth installment in "The Conjuring" universe means that moviegoers expect, even demand, to be terrified by Taissa Farmiga's novice nun and Demian Bichir's Father Burke as they explore the supernatural goings on in a Romanian Monastery in 1952. But "The Nun"'s posters, and especially its trailer, have teased it as a horror film that will burrow its way into your subconscious.

It turns out that there's an integral reason why "The Nun" feels authentically terrifying, too. During a recent discussion with director Corin Hardy, he revealed that they shot the film in Transylvania, a place he calls the "heartland" of horror.

"My first film, 'The Hallow,' was written and made around Irish folklore," says Hardy. "I was pleased to be able to go to the heart of Irish mythology and shoot in Ireland. So I am two-for-two with 'The Nun' being set in Romania.

"We were able to actually go to Romania. We were based in Bucharest for the studio part," he adds. "But we scouted and found the right type of gothic castle for our main location, and for the convents and cemeteries up north in Transylvania. So it was very fitting to do the film in the heartland of Dracula."

Just to make sure that the press were suitably terrified, New Line and Warner Bros. also decided to hold the first junket in a "400-year-old convent in the mountains of Mexico City." But while Hardy clearly believes that shooting in such a creepy and disturbing location aided "The Nun," he insists that the script already had all the ingredients to create a "classic, old school, gothic horror movie."

"As a fan of horror generally, and having grown up through the ages of horror, and as a child growing up loving Hammer horror, gothic horror and Dracula, to get sent the script for 'The Nun,' which was written by Gary Dauberman and James Wan, the story was on the page," says Hardy. "It sort of steadily dawned on me as I was reading the script and then as I was making the movie that what we were making was a classic old school gothic horror movie, and we were shooting it in Transylvania. It is quite rare in this day and age to get those elements."

Hardy only had a short window of time to appreciate these circumstances, because after landing the job of directing "The Nun" he was put to work almost immediately.

"It was quite a roller-coaster because when I got sent the script I read it immediately and was really excited to feel that this was something that I could really apply myself to," he says. "After meeting with the producers I pretty much got the job the next day. Then we rapidly went in pre-production and production. Especially since I flew straight to Romania to scout, prep and then shoot 10 or 12 weeks later. So we had to hit the ground running."

"But James Wan and his Atomic Monsters company, New Line, Warner Bros. ... they're all such a tight-knit group because they have done so many of these movies," Hardy adds. "New Line has such a good reputation with the horror genre, having done 'Nightmare On Elm Street' and then onwards. It was like joining a family."

"The Nun" is now in theaters.

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Ethan Hawke on the unrecognized genius of Blaze Foley

Ethan Hawke brings Blaze Foley's story to the big screen. IFC FILMS

The Oscar nominee talks us through his new biopic.

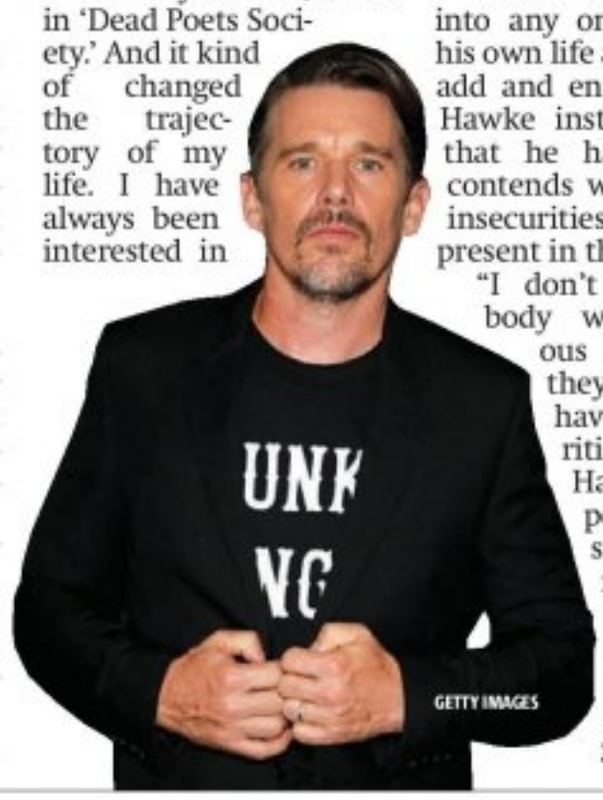
GREGORY WAKEMAN
Gregory.Wakeman@metro.us

Not a lot of people have heard of Blaze Foley. Even fewer had heard of the country musician or his work when he was shot to death at the age of just 39 on Feb. 1, 1989.

That's undoubtedly going to change over the coming weeks and months thanks to "Blaze," Ethan Hawke's biopic of Foley, which explores his endlessly creative yet ultimately financially unfulfilled life. But, for Hawke, that is exactly what drew him to Foley and "Blaze," especially because he never has had to face the hurdles that his subject encountered.

"A few years ago I made a documentary about an 88-year-old piano maestro who in a lot of ways is the photo negative to this story," Hawke recently told Metro. "It is another portrait of a person who sacrifices their life to the arts without the superficial accoutrements that [have] happened to me from the time I was 18. I think my whole life I have been really impressed with these people. Because they are stewards of their craft without anyone heaping prizes on them or how they make a living," he adds.

"At 18 years old, I was in 'Dead Poets Society.' And it kind of changed the trajectory of my life. I have always been interested in


GETTY IMAGES

what it is like not to have that."

Rather than tapping into any one period of his own life and career to add and enrich "Blaze," Hawke instead insisted that he has and still contends with his own insecurities that were present in the singer.

"I don't think anybody who is serious about what they do doesn't have insecurities," says Hawke. "Some people's insecurities manifest as arrogance, some as self-destruction, some get neurotic and go to the shrink. Lots of people struggle with it."

"Blaze" promises to bring Foley's music and philosophies to a huge new audience, but it also highlights the various demons that repeatedly got in the way of his success — a battle that Hawke has had to contend with throughout his career.

"I guess the ideal would be to not look at it as a battle, and look at it as a necessary flow," he says. "There are a lot of artists that are allergic to the necessary pitfalls of self-aggrandizement. The problem is, if you're too allergic to it then you are never going to sell a record.

"It is a dance between how to make good movies, but if I make a good movie that doesn't make any money, then I don't get to make any more movies," Hawke adds. "If I only make movies that make money, then why make them to begin with, if I don't have anything to say?"

Hawke notes that if you're in it just to cash a check, "you should just go work for Wall Street.

"Then at least you're doing what you're saying you're doing," says Hawke. "I see that struggle. I see some people handle it beautifully. And then I see people smack their heads on the ground."

"Blaze" opens in select theaters Sept. 7.

EPA PUBLIC NOTICE

Administrative Record available for public review

Belgrade Transformer Site

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announces the availability of the Administrative Record (AR) for removal activities conducted at the **Belgrade Transformer site** in Philadelphia, where EPA is safely securing and disposing of hazardous materials found in an abandoned building on Belgrade St., between E. Somerset and E. Auburn Streets, found to pose an immediate threat to public health and the environment. The AR contains documents about cleanup activities to ensure public health and the environment are protected.

Cleanup documents can be viewed at the following locations:

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Jim Carrey imagines a sad 'Mister Rogers' Neighborhood' in 'Kidding'

The new series reteams Carry with "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" director Michel Gondry.

ANDREW HUSBAND
letters@metro.us

Jim Carrey's "Kidding" debuts on Showtime this weekend. ALL PHOTOS BY SHOWTIME

What if Fred Rogers' personal and professional life didn't pan out quite like it did before, during and after "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood"?

This is the implicit question posed by "Kidding," the new Showtime comedy series that sees Jim Carrey and Michel Gondry working together again for the first time since 2004's "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind." Of course, neither Rogers nor his show are ever mentioned, but Carrey's Jeff and his television alter ego Mr. Pickles most assuredly depend on the former for relevance.

Aside from this loose connection, however, the fictional dramedy imagined by "Kidding" immediately explodes out into something else as Jeff's life comes crumbling down throughout the series, which in turn threatens to destroy Mr. Pickles and everything he has accomplished on the show-within-a-show, "Mr. Pickles' Puppet Time."

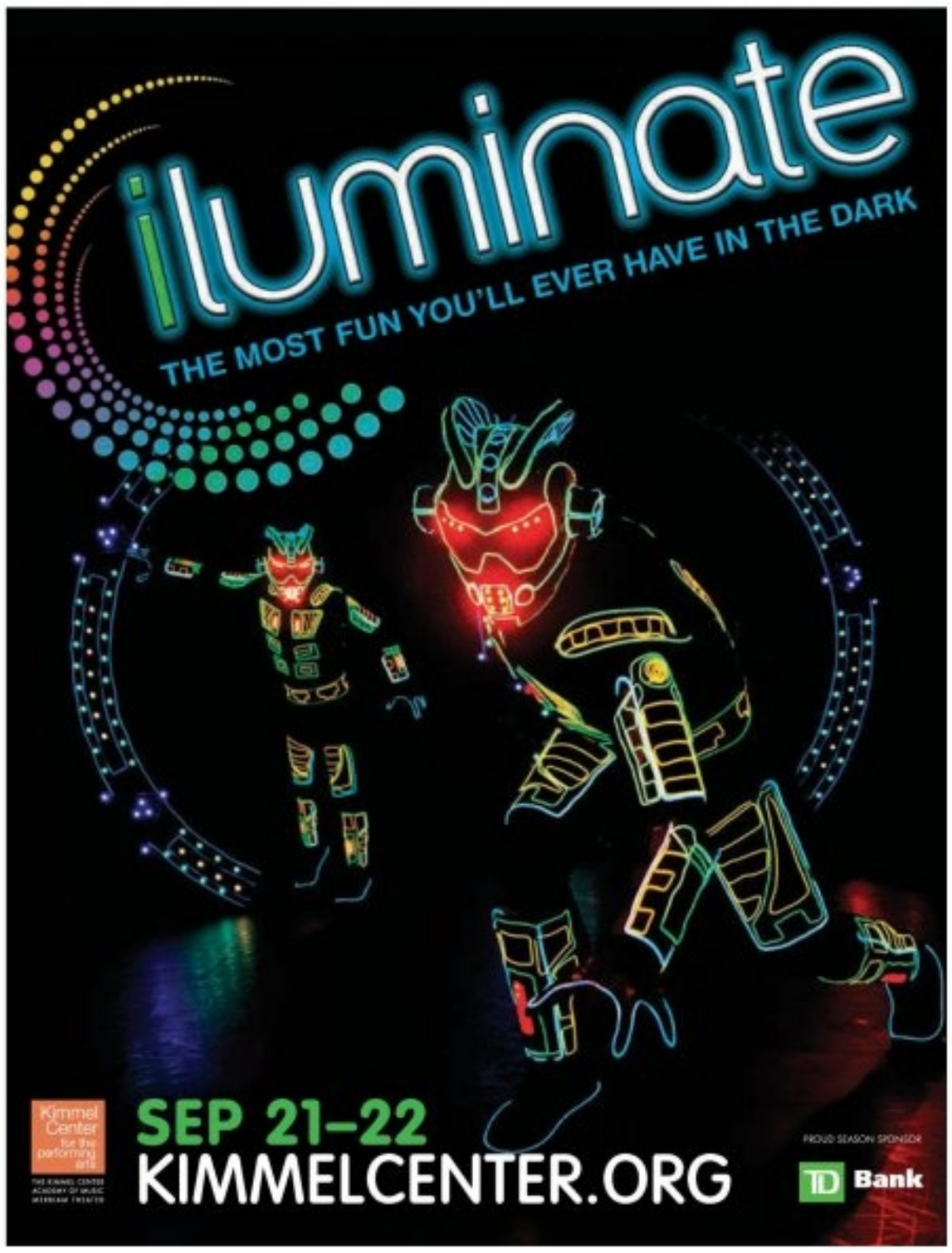
Tagging along for the ride is Sebastian (Frank Langella), the executive producer of "Mr. Pickles." While Seb endeavors to support both Jeff and the show, as "Kidding" progresses it becomes increasingly apparent to him that the titular Mr. Pickles might bring the show down with him, should his downward spiral continue to increase in both velocity and magnitude. Meanwhile, the head puppeteer, Deirdre (Catherine Keener) tries to help Jeff as best as she can while dealing with her own problems.

At home, or at least what's left of it, Jeff struggles to cope with a life without his estranged wife Jill (Judy Greer) and their son Will (Cole Allen). As what's left of his family continues to unravel, largely due to his own devices — such as payments to an unknown recipient kept secret from Jill, and a one-night stand with a stranger — the comedy and drama of the television personality's real and fictional lives begin to intersect more often.

"Kidding" is not an easily digestible, traditional sitcom like "The Big Bang Theory" or, to a lesser degree, "The Good Place." It truly lives up to the "dramedy" mantle, and shares more in common with series like "Atlanta" and "Weeds" that, though billed as comedies, frequently flirt with the boundaries of the genre. As a result, "Kidding" can be hard to watch for the squeamish, but if shows like the latter are your thing, then you will most likely enjoy it.

It's also a treat to see Carrey and Gondry working together again for the first time in 14 years. While "Kidding" bears many of the visual and tonal hallmarks of the French director's past works, the show definitely owes its existence to creator Dave Holstein, whose previous shows include "I'm Dying Up Here," "The Bring" and the aforementioned "Weeds."

"Kidding" premieres Sunday at 10 p.m. on Showtime.



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- SAN FRANCISCO AT MINNESOTA (-6.5)
- BUFFALO AT BALTIMORE (-7.5)
- JACKSONVILLE (-3) AT NEW YORK GIANTS
- TAMPA BAY AT NEW ORLEANS (-9.5)
- HOUSTON AT NEW ENGLAND (-6.5)
- TENNESSEE (-1.5) AT MIAMI
- CHIEFS AT CHARGERS (-3.5)
- SEATTLE AT DENVER (-3)
- DALLAS AT CAROLINA (-3)
- WASHINGTON AT ARIZONA (-1)
- CHICAGO AT GREEN BAY (-7.5)
- NEW YORK JETS AT DETROIT (-6.5)

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Sam Darnold and the Jets will take on Detroit on Monday night. GETTY IMAGES

NFL WEEK 1 ODDS, PICKS

MAKE MONEY

MetroBet takes a look at NFL Week 1.

ROBERT CRISCOLA
letters@metro.us

Metro takes a look at two games for NFL Week 1.

JACKSONVILLE (-3) AT NEW YORK GIANTS

The Giants aim to wipe the bad taste of 2017 out of their mouths, but they'll be facing the AFC-finalist Jaguars in Game 1 of the 2018 campaign.

Jacksonville, tops in the NFL in rushing last season, bring Leonard Fournette and company into town against a Big Blue defense that was 27th in run defense a year ago. To make matters worse, linebacker Olivier Vernon's health is in question after he tweaked his ankle in practice. As long as the Jaguars can control the game on the ground, Blake Bortles won't be pressured into many mistakes under center. Run defense was shaky for Jacksonville last year (21st), but the Giants have Pro Football Focus' 26th-ranked offensive line trying to create opportunities for Saquon Barkley. Cornerback Jalen Ramsey should keep Odell Beckham Jr. under wraps when Eli Manning drops back to throw, and Manning will likely be without safety valve Evan Engram (concussion). Look for Jacksonville, who are 9-4 ATS in their last 13 road games (per Oddsshark.com), to stifle the Giants in the season opener.

The pick: Jaguars -3

NEW YORK JETS AT DETROIT (-6.5)

The Jets don't have a lot of help for Sam Darnold in terms of perimeter talent, with Robby Anderson and Jermaine Kearse being his top two targets. Isaiah Crowell is merely a decent backup ball carrier who's being asked to be a go-to guy this year. Darnold could get himself in a lot of trouble in third-and-long situations if forced to throw against cornerback Darius Slay, the NFL leader in INTs last season (8).

The pick: Lions -6.5

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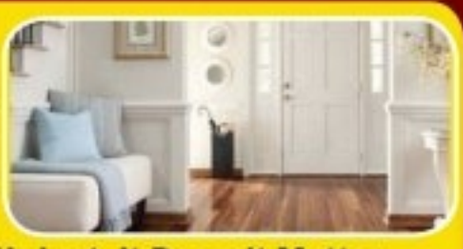

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FANTASY FOOTBALL ADVICE FOR WEEK 1

OPINION

BILL DUBIEL

Bill Dubiel is a fantasy football expert at Rotoballer.com and Metro.us

Alex Collins should shine in Week 1. GETTY IMAGES

Here's our fantasy football advice for Week 1.

Keelan Cole the Top Cat

When Marqise Lee was lost for the season with a knee injury, the Jacksonville Jaguars presumably lost their No. 1 wide receiver. In his absence, the door is open for someone to step into that role, and Keelan Cole is the receiver most ready to make an immediate fantasy impact. Cole shined down the stretch last year, racking up 475 yards and three touchdowns on 23 catches over the last five weeks of the 2017 season. He was incredibly efficient with the limited targets he was given, posting the second-best yards per reception of any receiver in the NFL. In 2018 he has the opportunity to supplement that efficiency with volume, as long as he can hold off fellow sophomore Dede Westbrook. Cole should be able to impress right from the get-go, as a matchup with the sub-par New York Giants secondary awaits in Week 1.

Great matchup for Collins in Week 1

Alex Collins has been a favorite target of mine all preseason, and if you were lucky to snatch him up he should provide an immediate return in Week 1. Collins and the Ravens will host the Buffalo Bills, the team that ranked dead last against the run in 2017.

NFL Sleepers of the Week

Michael Gallup, WR, Dallas Cowboys — Gallup should start right away and have an immediate opportunity to take over as the top wide out on the Cowboys. The talented rookie merely has to outplay Allen Hurns, Cole Beasley and Terrence Williams.

James Conner, RB, Pittsburgh Steelers — With Le'Veon Bell all but certain to miss Week 1 (he hasn't yet reported to the Steelers), Conner might be immediately deployed as the Steelers' feature back in their Week 1 matchup with the Browns. Coach Mike Tomlin has said if that comes to pass, they'll use Conner as they would Bell.

Tyrod Taylor, QB, Cleveland Browns — Taylor is going to have to "run and gun" to keep pace with the Steelers in Week 1, and even if they come in garbage time he should have no problem cruising to 20+ fantasy points in this matchup.

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Elton Brand, center, is a top candidate for the Sixers' GM job. GETTY IMAGES

Sixers GM search continues

Philly is now looking at internal candidates.

JOVAN ALFORD
jovan.alford@metro.us

The Sixers are conducting interviews this week in hopes of finding a new general manager and will reportedly talk to four more candidates for the vacant position.

Shams Charania of The Athletic reported on Thursday that the team plans to interview internal front-office executives Elton Brand, Marc Eversley, Ned Cohen, and Alex Rucker next week.

Last week, the Sixers made an announcement that they promoted all four team executives to different positions within the basketball operations department. Brand, who is the GM of the Sixers' NBA G-League affiliate (Delaware Blue Coats), was named the vice president of basketball operations.

Cohen, who used to be the team's VP of basketball operations, will now serve as the assistant GM. He joined the Sixers in May 2016, after working 12 years in the NBA league office.

Eversley is going into his third season with the Sixers and was named to the role of senior VP of player personnel. Before taking a role with Philadelphia, he spent time with both the Toronto Raptors and Washington Wizards.

Under his new title, Eversley will be responsible for trying to acquire and retain elite NBA players, along with overseeing player personnel and talent evaluation.

Last but not least, Rucker was given the title of senior VP of analytics and strategy, having been with the organization since 2016.

It does not come as a surprise to see the Sixers interview all four guys, especially since they've all played an integral role in the team's moves this offseason. However, Brand and Cohen seem like the best candidates, based on experience.

The Sixers have seen Brand's talent evaluation up close for over a year with Delaware, while Cohen has been involved with the league for many years and done Brand's job already.

As previously mentioned, the Sixers are reportedly interviewing external candidates Larry Harris, Justin Vanik, and Gersson Rosas this week.

Sixers managing partner Josh Harris spoke with ESPN recently about their mindset heading into these interviews for the GM vacancy.

"For us, we need someone to add real value, which includes looking at young, up-and-coming basketball executives and non-traditional candidates," Harris said.

"We're going to have a pretty selective list," he explained. "This is not going to be a huge tournament. We're going to talk to some people who aren't sitting GMs who could add value to our situation."

The key thing to take from Harris' statements is that the Sixers are looking for someone who is going to add real value. All of these candidates should fill that checkbox based on their experience and background.

With that being said, the Sixers will not rush this process, as Harris also mentioned that they are fine with keeping the current front-office situation together for the 2018-19 season. Philadelphia has this collaborative decision-making process going on in the front office with head coach Brett Brown serving as the team's interim GM.

However, having tha type of mindset reportedly ended up hurting the Sixers in their GM search.

According to Keith Pompey of Philly.com, the Sixers interviewed former Cleveland Cavaliers General Manager David Griffin this summer, but felt like he was not the right person for the job due to their current front-office structure.

Pompey also added in his report that the Sixers do not want a GM who will have the final say.

It should be interesting to see how this ultimately plays out for the Sixers as they are toeing a thin line. While it is nice to have multiple parties involved in various player personnel decisions, you need someone who will make the final call. That person cannot be the head coach.

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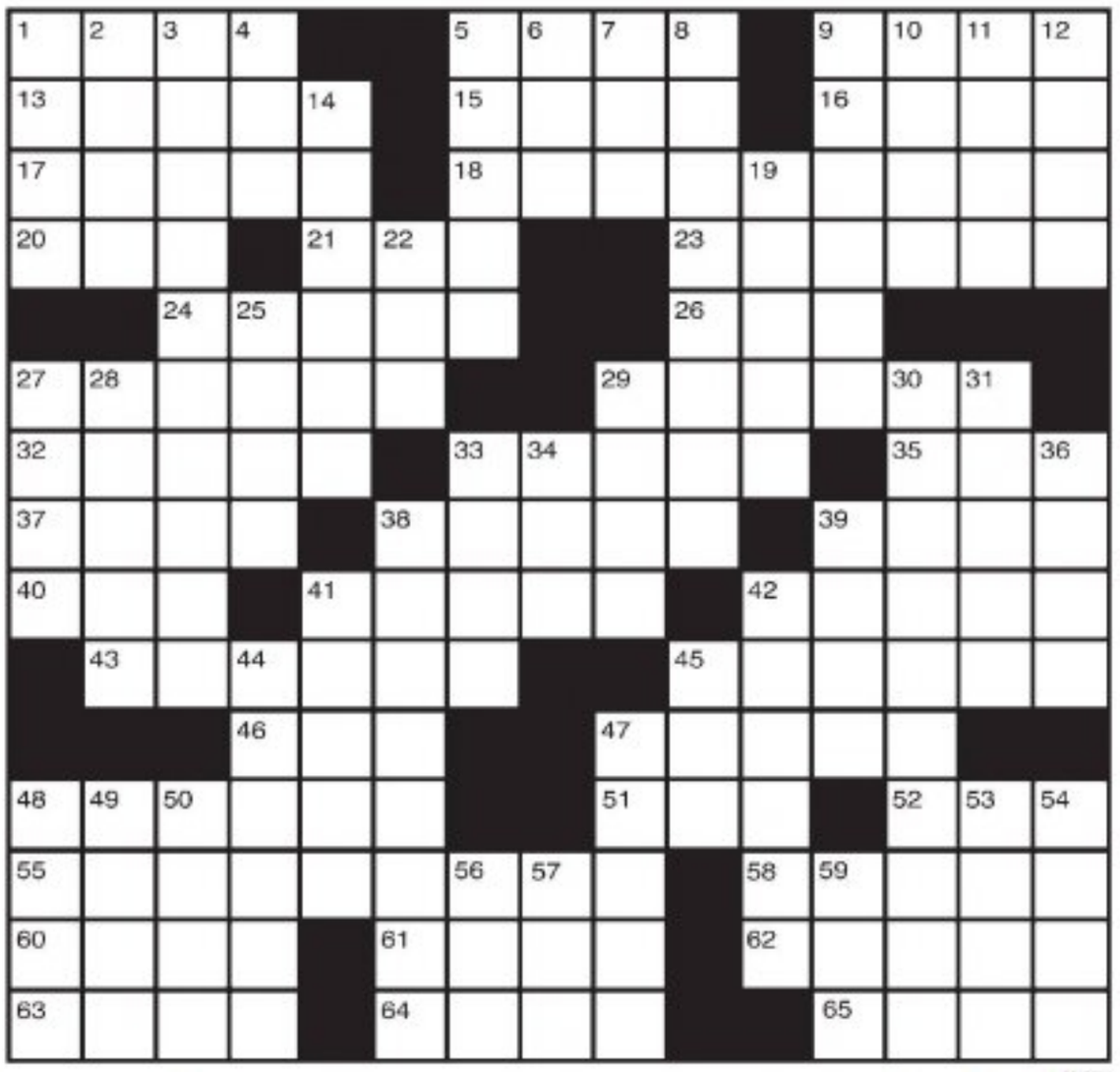

BY TCA

ACROSS

1 Blood problem
5 Slimy film
9 Prefix for way or bishop
13 Gruesome
15 Zilch
16 Bylaw
17 Sports building
18 Worship
20 Margaret's nickname
21 Deface; spoil
23 Adheres
24 Give a speech
26 "__ got the whole world in His hands..."
27 Go back on a promise
29 Mrs. Washington
32 Get up
33 Back's opposite
35 Want __; newspaper section
37 Pesky insect
38 Become swollen
39 Stuttgart señora
40 Stealing or coveting
41 Bozo
42 Police officer's ID
43 Shun
45 Haddock & halibut
46 __ Cruces, NM
47 Up in arms
48 Detests
51 Two in Tijuana
52 Phone inventor's initials
55 Gorgeous
58 Murphy or Cibrian
60 Come down to earth
61 Facial center
62 Sword fights
63 Uptight
64 Equipment
65 Probability

DOWN

1 Applaud
2 Entice; tempt
3 Beaver State folks
4 Cheap metal
5 Trap
6 Massachusetts' Cape __
7 Family card game
8 Storekeeper
9 Painter
10 Destroy
11 Wooden shoe
12 Cluckers
14 Wreck
19 On the ball
22 Feasted
25 Nap
27 Cleaning cloths
28 "Sesame Street" fellow
29 Complain
30 Stubborn; willful
31 Old saying
33 Move along smoothly
34 Quarrel
36 Takes to court
38 Prayer before meals
39 Speedy
41 Diagram
42 Unfairly slanted
44 Overcast
45 To and __
47 Lazybones
48 Up to the task
49 Rosary piece
50 Word attached to nail or man
53 Overlay with a gold coating
54 Mrs. Truman
56 Enemy
57 Neighbor of Canada: abbr.
59 Twosome

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U	V	N	V	G	O	B	L	I	N
K	R	A	V	E	N	M	B	M	Y
N	N	M	T	V	I	Y	D	A	C
O	E	R	A	U	H	S	M	R	A
I	B	E	W	L	R	T	R	Y	T
P	E	D	X	T	N	E	P	J	S
R	L	I	D	U	K	R	E	A	N
O	C	P	A	R	I	I	T	N	E
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S	U	P	O	T	C	O	R	D	G

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		4	5				6	
5		6		3		1		
7						3	1	5
	6						4	
4	1	3						8
		8		4		7		6
	4				9	8		
		2	6	7	8	4	3	

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R	I	C	A		R	E	G	R	E	T	T	I	N	G
O	N	A		F	I	R	E	D		R	I	N	S	E
		S	P	A	D	E			N	O	N			
O	P	I	A	T	E			L	A	U	G	H	S	
A	R	O	S	E		A	W	A	I	T		O	E	R
T	I	N	T		P	R	O	W	L		G	R	I	T
S	E	A		R	A	C	E	S		C	A	I	N	E
	S	L	E	I	G	H			R	A	Z	Z	E	S
			D	D	E			C	A	M	E	O		
A	B	O	D	E		S	T	R	I	P		N	B	A
R	E	G	I	S	T	E	R	E	D		S	T	I	R
C	A	R	E		E	L	O	P	E		K	A	L	E
S	U	E	S		A	L	D	E	R		I	L	L	

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